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Organic Products

Organic Food Labeling - New EU Rules

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Report Highlights:

In June 2007, the EU adopted a new framework regulation (Regulation 834/2007) on organic production and labeling. Measures for the implementation of Regulation 834/2007 were published on September 18, 2008 (Commission Regulation 889/2008). The new rules will enter into force on January 1, 2009.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Organic Food Labeling – New EU Rules

New Legislation

On June 28, 2007, the EU adopted [Council Regulation 834/2007](#) on organic production and labeling. Regulation 834/2007 is a general framework regulation that sets out common principles and objectives with regard to plant, livestock, and aquaculture production, the collection of wild plants and seaweeds, rules on conversion, and processed food production incl. wine, feed and organic yeast. The new regulation repeals Regulation 2092/91 and will enter into force on January 1, 2009. Measures for the implementation of Regulation 834/2007 were published on September 18, 2008 as [Commission Regulation 889/2008](#). However, the harmonization of wine processing rules will require more time which means that specific implementing rules for wine will be established at a later date.

Labeling

The term “organic” and all its derivatives or diminutives such as “bio” and “eco” may be used only to label products that comply with EU organic production rules. The Annex to Regulation 834/2007 lists the term “organic” in all the official EU languages. Processed food products can be labeled as organic only if at least 95% of the ingredients of are organic. All other food products produced according to the rules may carry references to organic ingredients in the list of ingredients only. Special labeling provisions apply to processed foods which include ingredients that cannot be obtained organically such as products of hunting and fishing. The use of GMOs is prohibited but the labeling threshold of 0.9% for the accidental presence of authorized GMOs also applies to organic products.

The term “organic” may be used only:

- a) in the sales description if at least 95% by weight of its ingredients of agricultural origin are organic
- b) in the list of ingredients on products less than 95% organic to indicate individual organic ingredients
- c) in the list of ingredients and in the same visual field as the sales description if the main ingredient is a product of hunting or fishing, the product contains other ingredients of agricultural origin that are all organic; the food complies with the rules on the production of processed food

When reference is made to the organic production method in the ingredients list, the total percentage of organic ingredients in proportion to the total quantity of ingredients of agricultural origin must be indicated.

EU Organic Logo & Origin Labeling

Under the new regulation, the use of the EU organic logo becomes mandatory for pre-packaged organic food produced in the EU but may be accompanied by national or private logos. For any organic products (pre-packaged and non pre-packaged) imported from third countries, the use of the EU logo is optional. However, when the EU logo appears on the label, the indication of the place where the products were farmed is required. Technical reproduction rules are laid down in Annex XI to Regulation 889/2008.

The introduction of a new EU organic logo was initially planned for January 1, 2009 but has been delayed until July 1, 2010. Due to similarities with existing logos, the European Commission had to withdraw the new logo and organized a public logo designing contest in July 2008.

Compulsory Indications

When the EU logo is used, the following compulsory indications on organic food labels must be easily visible, clearly legible and indelible:

- a) The code number of the control authority or control body
- b) An indication of the place where the agricultural raw materials of which the product is composed have been farmed:
 - "EU agriculture" where the agricultural raw material has been farmed in the EU
 - "non-EU Agriculture" where the raw material has been farmed in third countries. The indication "non-EU" may be replaced or supplemented by the name of a country if all the agricultural raw materials of which the product is composed have been farmed in that country.
 - "EU/non-EU Agriculture" where part of the raw materials have been farmed in the EU and a part of it has been farmed in a third country

Conditions for the use of the code number and the indication of the place of origin are set out in Article 58 of Regulation 889/2008.

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